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Secretary of State Alex Padilla and Attorney General Xavier Becerra Send Cease and Desist Letters on Ballot Drop Boxes

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today California Secretary of State Alex Padilla and Attorney General Xavier Becerra sent a cease and desist order to the California Republican Party to stop operating unofficial ballot drop boxes. This follows reports of unofficial drop boxes being operated by Republican campaigns in Fresno, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties.

[Click here to view a video recording of the virtual press conference.](#)

[Click here to view a copy of the Cease and Desist Letter.](#)

[Click here to view attachments to the Cease and Desist Letter.](#)

"Misleading voters is wrong, regardless of who is doing it," Secretary of State Alex Padilla said. "Political parties and campaigns can engage in get out the vote efforts, but they cannot violate state law. The unofficial, unauthorized drop boxes in question violate state law and jeopardize the security of voters' ballots. State and local elections officials have worked tirelessly to provide voters multiple safe, secure options to return their vote-by-mail ballots. These unauthorized drop boxes are a disservice to elections administrators and a disservice to voters who deserve to cast their ballots with clarity and confidence."

"There is nothing more precious or fundamental in a real democracy than the vote," said Attorney General Becerra. "Anyone who tampers with the vote is tampering with free and fair elections. We will do all that's necessary under law to protect Californians' right to vote."

The Secretary of State's office has also sent letters to the other qualified political parties, reminding them of the rules about ballot drop boxes.

Voters can look-up official ballot drop boxes, drop-off locations, and early voting sites at caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov.

Voters should report any unauthorized ballot drop boxes to their county elections office or to the Secretary of State's office at 1-800-345-VOTE or votesure@sos.ca.gov

The Secretary of State's guidance to county elections officials on ballot drop boxes can be found at: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/pdf/2020/october/20240jl.pdf>

Problems with Unofficial Ballot Drop Boxes:

- These unofficial drop boxes mislead voters and were misrepresented as being “official” and secure.
- CA Elections Code Section 3025 specifies that vote-by-mail ballot drop boxes are “secure receptacles” established by local elections officials. These boxes must adhere to state regulations for security.
- Use of these ballot drop boxes calls into question compliance with CA Elections Code 3017 and 3011, which allows voters to designate an individual to return their ballot. Any individual returning a ballot on behalf of a voter must provide their name, signature, and relation to the voter on the return envelope. Voters must know who specifically is returning their ballot.

Tips for voters:

- Make a plan to vote. You can return your vote-by-mail using the prepaid postage return envelope or by bringing it to any official drop box, voting location, or county elections office.
 - Voters can also choose someone to return their ballot. Only choose someone you trust to return your ballot. You and the other person must sign the back of the return envelope. Never give your ballot to someone else unless you have completed, signed, and sealed the return envelope.
- Sign up for ballot tracking. You can sign-up at wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov to get automatic notifications by text message (SMS), email, or voice message about the status of your vote-by-mail ballot. You'll be notified once your county has received your ballot, once it has been counted, and if there are any issues with the ballot.
- Get information on voting from trusted, official sources—the county elections office and the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has resources for California voters at vote.ca.gov.

